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An Evaluation of Help Wanted

A Report on Research to Evaluate a Communications Campaign on School Reform and Worker Skills

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Introduction

In fall 1991, the Public Agenda Foundation, working with local businesses, colleges and universities, community organizations, and media in Hartford, Indianapolis, and Phoenix conducted a public education campaign entitled HELP WANTED. It was designed to alert citizens to the economic dangers of a poorly trained and poorly educated American workforce.

The HELP WANTED public education campaign was the result of over two years of indepth opinion research conducted by the Public Agenda Foundation for the Business-Higher Education Forum, a group of leading business executives and college and university presidents. The research suggested that many Americans simply have not made the connection between the country's lagging economic competitiveness and the substandard education and skills of growing numbers of workers.*

In each HELP WANTED campaign, a local TV station and daily newspaper cooperated with Public Agenda to conduct intensive public service campaigns lasting from four to six weeks. The campaign attempted to help citizens understand the need for the country to be more competitive and the role an educated and highly-trained workforce must play in that task. It sought to increase public knowledge about workforce problems such as illiteracy, school drop-outs, and the need for computer skills among blue collar workers. It also underscored the *economic* impact of a lack of basic skills among workers and a shortage of highly trained scientific and technical workers. Finally, HELP WANTED gave citizens the opportunity to weigh arguments for and against a wide range of proposals put forward to upgrade student and worker skills. These included requiring students to pass a test for high school graduation, requiring more science and math throughout schooling, extending the school year, starting a national literacy program, and giving tax incentives to business to enhance worker training.

The HELP WANTED campaign was conducted in Nashville in spring 1991, in Hartford, Indianapolis, and Phoenix in fall 1991, and in Seattle in winter 1992. Additional campaigns will be launched in Austin, TX, Flint, MI, and the states of Delaware and Florida in fall, 1992. Over a dozen other communities have expressed interest in conducting HELP WANTED locally.

To help evaluate the effectiveness of HELP WANTED and learn how future campaigns might be improved, the Business Roundtable funded random sample telephone surveys in Hartford, Indianapolis, and Phoenix before the launch of the campaign and again at its close. These three cities were selected as evaluation sites because their campaigns occurred within the same time period. Public Agenda designed the evaluation which was conducted in the three cities by Princeton Survey Research Associates.

Help Wanted had a consistently positive impact on public understanding of the need to upgrade school and workplace skills.

Overview

The evaluation suggests that HELP WANTED had a consistently positive impact on public understanding of the need to upgrade school and workplace skills. The campaign enhanced knowledge and concern about key aspects of the problem and increased public support for some solutions. Since the magnitude of the effect on public attitudes was directly related to the length and intensity of media coverage in each city, it is reasonable to assume that continued exposure to these topics will yield further gains. The campaign seemed to have a particular impact on blacks, Hispanics, and other minorities.

One aspect of this issue — the inadequacy of education provided in middle class schools — may be particularly hard to communicate.

The evaluation has important implications for communities or organizations conducting HELP WANTED campaigns in the future. The evaluation suggests several ways to enhance communication about these issues. The results also suggest that while public approval for some proposals to upgrade student and worker skills may increase given more exposure and debate, others may be "nonstarters." That is, large numbers of Americans are likely to reject certain proposals even when their general understanding of the issue has increased. And finally, the evaluation suggests that one aspect of this issue — the inadequacy of education provided in middle class schools — may be particularly hard to communicate.

The Media Campaigns

The precise length, intensity, and components of the campaigns were somewhat different from city to city. In each, however, a commercial network affiliate and a daily newspaper participated. In general, the media used the following elements to convey information about the issue: TV PSAs, local TV news coverage, a TV documentary or other special program, a newspaper supplement, newspaper articles, editorials and/or op-eds, and distribution of a "ballot" at the campaign close. Some of the materials (PSAa, TV documentary, newspaper supplement, print ads, and ballot) were prepared by Public Agenda. Local media also prepared PSAs and special programming, in addition to providing local news, feature stories, and editorials on the issue. Each campaign included active participation by local businesses, colleges, universities, and community and leadership groups.

HELP WANTED was most intense in Indianapolis where both the TV station, WTHR-TV (NBC) and the newspaper, ***The Indianapolis Star & News***, provided strong coverage daily for about six weeks. In Hartford, WFSB-TV (CBS) provided daily coverage for about four weeks, and ***The Hartford Courant*** provided continuous — though not daily — coverage for the same period of time. ***The Stamford Advocate and Greenwich Times*** also participated in some aspects of the campaign. In Phoenix, the media portion of the campaign was shorter and less intense. The TV station, KTVK-TV (ABC) broadcast PSAs for about four weeks and produced a local half-hour documentary, but did not cover the topics extensively in its news coverage. ***The Arizona Republic & Phoenix Gazette*** provided just over two weeks of coverage, although feature stories were carried on the newspaper's front page for one week.

Although the campaigns formally lasted about four to six weeks, the period of intensive daily exposure to substantive messages — the facts and arguments believed to advance public understanding — was shorter. The opening week of coverage in each city was promotional — designed primarily to build awareness of the HELP WANTED effort. The last week was generally devoted to telling citizens how to obtain and return ballots. Thus, the actual time devoted solely to substantive information about the issue ranged from two to four weeks.

About 32,000 citizens in the three cities returned ballots. In most cases, this required significant effort on the respondent's part including cutting the ballot out of the newspaper, addressing an envelope, and providing first-class postage. Thus, the 32,000 figure represents a healthy return for an effort of this kind.

Local media prepared PSAs, and special programming, in addition to providing local news, feature stories, and editorials on the issue.

In addition to media coverage of the issue, all three campaigns included a variety of meetings and discussion groups held under the auspices of local businesses, schools, colleges, universities, and community organizations. Although the impact of these discussions on participants may not be captured in random sample surveys, they are nevertheless extremely important in building any constituency for change.

HELP WANTED was designed to approximate the *optimal public service* effort, that is, what might be expected through the voluntary efforts of concerned TV stations and newspapers. It should not be compared with the results that might be achieved through a paid advertising or political campaign where the depth of exposure and repetition of very specific messages can be enhanced, controlled, and targeted much more precisely. Moreover, HELP WANTED faced significant competition for the public's attention from such newsworthy events as the aftermath of the Soviet coup and collapse of the Soviet Union, the Senate hearings on Judge Thomas' nomination, the recession, and the Madrid conference on the Middle East. This was, of course, in addition to competition from local news items, entertainment programs on television and non-news features (sports, lifestyle, comics, etc.) in newspapers, along with the daily demands of work and family. In Hartford, for example, HELP WANTED took place in the midst of an acrimonious debate over the state's taxes and budget that both deserved and attracted substantial local news coverage.

Each campaign included active participation by local businesses, colleges, universities and community and leadership groups.

Campaign Snapshots

Hartford

Dates: September 9 - October 9, 1991
Heavy TV coverage: WFSB-TV(CBS)
Strong newspaper coverage: ***The Hartford Courant***
Supplementary newspaper coverage:
The Stamford Advocate and Greenwich Times
Significant corporate involvement/employee education:
Connecticut Business for Education Coalition (CBEC)
Union Carbide: Employee Education Program
Topics: Competitiveness, education beyond the three Rs, illiteracy, teacher training

Indianapolis

Dates: August 22 - October 16, 1991
Daily coverage: WTHR-TV (NBC)
Daily coverage: ***The Indianapolis Star & News***
Community co-sponsors: Indiana University/Arvin Industries
Community meetings organized through the National Issues Forums
Topics: Illiteracy, drop-outs, worker skills, longer school year

Phoenix

Dates: October 6 - November 5
Spot coverage, local documentary: KTVK-TV (ABC):
Front page articles one week plus additional coverage:
The Arizona Republic & Phoenix Gazette:
Community sponsor: Maricopa Community Colleges
Large scale meeting program through schools, college: over 15,000 participants
Spanish language ballot
Topics: Competitiveness, worker skills, illiteracy, scientific and technical skills

Key Findings

Breadth and Variability of Change

The before and after surveys show a broad range of positive campaign effects. The campaign increased citizens' knowledge about important aspects of the problem (illiteracy and high school drop-outs), their concern about the effect of school and workforce problems on the economy, and their willingness to support some proposals for change. The change in public attitudes was not confined to one or two questions, but instead occurred consistently over a number of items in the surveys.

Not surprisingly, the magnitude and breadth of change was directly related to the length and intensity of media coverage in each city. Thus, the change was most significant in Indianapolis which had the longest and most intensive campaign. There was somewhat less change in Hartford, and still less in Phoenix, where the media campaign was shortest and least intense.

In Indianapolis, for example, positive movement of five or more points occurred in 60% of the 20 questionnaire items where change could be expected. In Hartford, change of five points or more could be seen in 25% of the 20 targeted items. In Phoenix, change of this magnitude occurred in 10% of the items.

Although there was less change among *the general public* in both Hartford and Phoenix, understanding of the issue after HELP WANTED was frequently much higher among regular readers of the participating newspapers and regular viewers of news on the participating TV stations. In Hartford and Indianapolis, there were also sharp increases — of 15 to 20 points in some cases — in knowledge and understanding about HELP WANTED issues among blacks, Hispanics, and other minority residents.

Job One: Enhanced Knowledge

In Indianapolis positive movement of five or more points occurred in 60% of the 20 questionnaire items where change could be expected.

The campaign enhanced public knowledge about illiteracy and school drop-outs among the general public in Indianapolis and among the most attentive segments of the population in Hartford and Phoenix. In Indianapolis, the community with the longest and most intensive campaign, the number of residents correctly estimating the rate of illiteracy in the U.S. climbed from 22% before the campaign to 27% after the campaign. Similarly the percentage of Indianapolis residents correctly estimating the number of high school drop-outs rose from 17% before the campaign to 24% after the campaign. Finally, the percentage of Indianapolis residents correctly estimating the number of blue collar workers who will need computer skills in ten years rose from 60% before the campaign to 65% after the campaign. Correct estimates were often even higher among

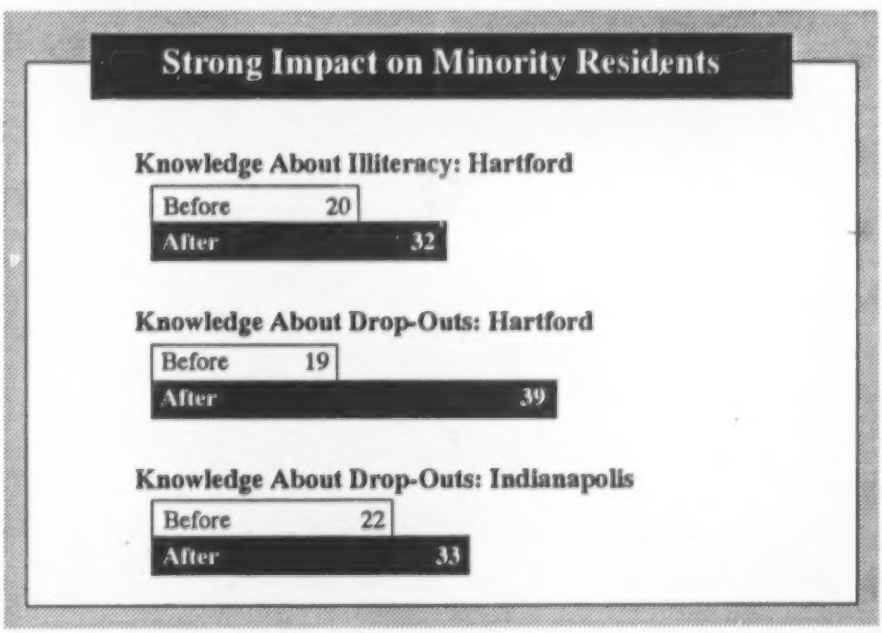
regular viewers of WTHR-TV news and regular readers of ***The Indianapolis Star***. There was no notable change on these items among the general public in Hartford and Phoenix, but regular news viewers of Hartford's WFSB-TV displayed greater knowledge about illiteracy and school drop-outs.

The campaign seemed to have a particularly significant impact on blacks, Hispanics, and other minorities in Hartford and Indianapolis. In Hartford, the number of minorities correctly estimating the illiteracy rate grew from 20% before the campaign to 32% afterward, a jump of 12 points. Similarly, the number of minorities correctly estimating the high school drop-out rate rose from 19% before the campaign to 39% after the campaign in Hartford (a 20 point jump) and from 22% to 33% in Indianapolis (an 11 point increase).

Rising Concern about the Economic Dangers of Poor Skills

Among the general public, concern that lack of basic skills poses a serious threat to the economy rose from 63% to 69% in both Indianapolis and Hartford, with even higher percentages appearing among regular viewers of WTHR-TV news in Indianapolis (72%) and among regular readers of the ***Indianapolis Star*** (71%). Concern about shortages of scientific and technical workers rose from 51% to 56% in Indianapolis, again with higher levels of concern among the regular TV news viewers (62%) and newspaper readers (59%).

Large numbers of residents in all three cities named inadequate schools as a serious threat to the economy both before and after HELP WANTED. The campaign did, however, seem to substantially increase concern about this topic among minorities. In Hartford, the percentage of minorities naming inadequate schools as a serious economic threat climbed from 62% before the campaign to 77% afterwards, a rise of 15 points. In Indianapolis, the percentage jumped from 73% before the campaign to 88% afterward, also a rise of 15 points.

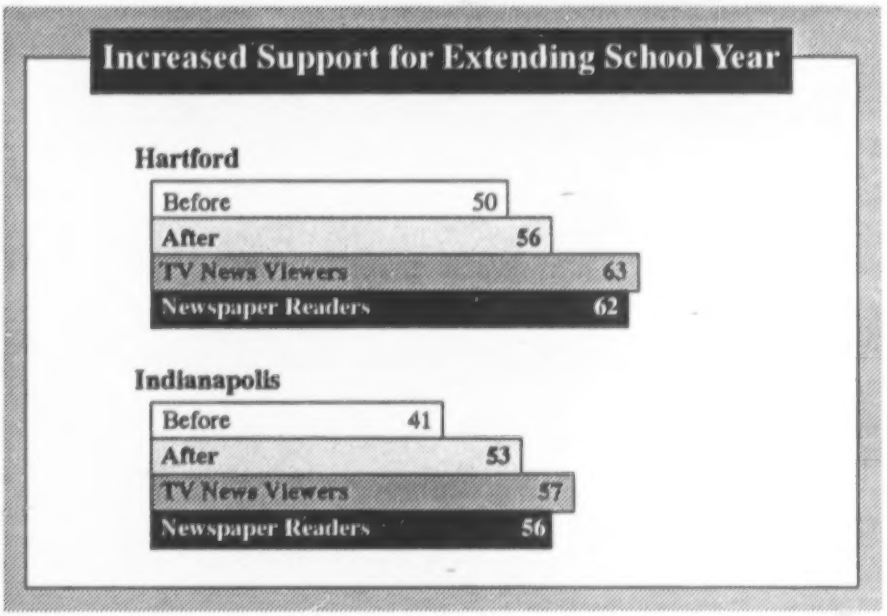


More Support for Some Proposals

HELP WANTED substantially increased public support for some proposals to improve education or upgrade worker skills. The largest increases came in response to two proposals: giving tax incentives to businesses that upgrade worker skills and extending the school year.

For example, support for tax breaks to companies providing technical training to their workers rose from 52% before the campaign to 59% after the campaign in Phoenix and from 55% to 60% in Indianapolis. Support for this proposal was even higher among regular readers of the sponsoring newspapers (61% in Phoenix and 63% in Indianapolis) or regular viewers of news on the sponsoring TV stations (58% in Phoenix and 67% in Indianapolis). In Hartford, support for this proposal started at a higher level (65%) than in the other two cities, but showed no significant change as a result of the campaign.

Support for extending the school year showed the greatest magnitude of change, jumping by 12 points (from 41% to 53%) in Indianapolis and by 6 points in Hartford (from 50% to 56%). Again, support for this proposal was even higher among regular viewers of TV news on the participating stations (57% in Indianapolis and 63% in Hartford) and regular readers of the newspaper (56% in Indianapolis and 62% in Hartford). While there was little change concerning this proposal among the general public in Phoenix (55% before the campaign and 57% after), support was much higher (64%) among regular readers of ***The Arizona Republic & Phoenix Gazette***.



Experts and leaders may disagree about whether extending the school year is of preeminent importance in improving education. However, it is a measure that is clearly understandable to most citizens, and it has significant trade-offs. Its potential impact on taxpayers' pocketbooks is easily comprehensible; it has a concrete effect on the personal lives of families, and it implies at least partial acceptance that the status quo just may not be good enough.

Proposals Resistant To Change

HELP WANTED produced little change in public attitudes in two categories of proposals — proposals that were very popular before the campaign and remained so afterward, and proposals that seemed to evoke specific and strong reservations.

Before the campaign, at least three out of four residents in all three communities supported proposals to launch a national literacy program, to require science and math for all children from kindergarten through high school, and to establish a high school exit exam. After the campaign, support for all three proposals remained at this 75% level or edged higher. In Hartford, support for requiring students to pass a test for high school graduation rose from 75% before the campaign to 81% after the campaign, with even higher levels of support among WFSB news viewers (87%) and among readers of ***The Hartford Courant*** (83%). Similarly, support for a national adult literacy program in Indianapolis rose from 79% before HELP WANTED to 84% afterward (87% among WTHR news viewers and 84% among readers of ***The Indianapolis Star***).

The ability of these three proposals to "hold their own" in the face of scrutiny and debate is striking. It is unusual for support for any proposal on any issue to rise above the 75-80% level. Support for these proposals started out at the consensus level and remained at the consensus level in all three cities, even though participating TV stations, newspapers, and the pre- and post-tests themselves specifically emphasized possible costs, risks, and trade-offs.

In sharp contrast, only about half of the residents in all three communities supported a proposal to pay teachers and principals based on student performance (46% in Hartford, 50% in Indianapolis, and 52% in Phoenix) before the campaign. HELP WANTED produced no tangible changes in support for this measure, although participating media emphasized the arguments for — along with the arguments against — this proposal.

Focus groups conducted earlier in the project suggest why many people resist this proposal.** Large numbers of respondents believed that it was unfair to hold teachers financially accountable for student success. They felt that family support and individual effort also play a pivotal role.

Both before and after the campaign, three out of four residents in all three cities supported a national literacy program, more science and math for all children, and a high school exit exam.

The Public's Perspective on the Economy

HELP WANTED attempted to convey a complex message built on two interconnected challenges: the need for the country to be more competitive abroad and the need to improve education and workplace skills in order to do so. The campaign produced notable and positive effects on public thinking about education and training and their importance to the health of the domestic economy, but it did not substantially raise the public's sense of urgency about improving America's ability to compete abroad. After HELP WANTED, residents in Indianapolis and Phoenix

Although 58% of minorities gave Hartford area schools a grade of A or B before HELP WANTED, that percentage plummeted to 31% after the campaign.

ranked economic competitiveness only seventh in priority out of eight problems facing the nation. In Hartford, where WFSB-TV and ***The Hartford Courant*** gave more emphasis to the issue, competitiveness was ranked sixth out of eight issues (Before the campaign, it was ranked seventh). Although the issue stayed near the bottom of the public's priority list, there is evidence of growing concern in Hartford. The percentage of residents who said competitiveness should be a top national priority rose from 51% before the campaign to 57% afterward, with even higher levels of concern among WFSB news viewers (64%) and readers of ***The Courant*** (60%).

In some respects, the lack of change in attitudes about competitiveness is not surprising. In Public Agenda materials prepared for use by local media, the competitiveness issue was mainly used as a backdrop for the discussion of the education and skills crisis. Local news and public affairs coverage, somewhat understandably, gave the lion's share of attention to questions about local schools and worker training, rather than focusing on questions of international trade and competitiveness.

It should be noted, however, that the HELP WANTED campaigns took place prior to the President's January trip to Japan — an event that catapulted competitiveness to the nation's front pages and made it the subject of radio call-in shows. Competitiveness is now on the "front burner." Americans feel a heightened sense of economic vulnerability due to the lingering recession and widely publicized white collar lay-offs. Thus, events may give HELP WANTED an immediacy and import that it simply did not have in its initial round. Here, bad news may give the campaign an inestimable "leg up."

Middle Class Complacency

Despite positive movements in a number of areas, the campaign may have been less effective than was hoped in raising the concern of middle class citizens about the state of schools in middle class neighborhoods. And piercing existing public attitudes in this area may prove daunting. Despite intensive media coverage of educational shortcomings, large numbers of residents in each campaign city continued to rate their local schools very highly. Fifty-six percent of Hartford residents, 38% of Indianapolis residents, and 36% of Phoenix residents gave public schools in their community a grade of A or B. Twenty-five percent or fewer in any city gave local schools a grade of D or F.

The endorsement of local schools was even higher among residents with children currently attending public school. After HELP WANTED, 66% of Hartford residents with children in public school (53% in Indianapolis and 52% in Phoenix) gave local schools a grade of A or B. As has been the case in a number of national surveys, residents of all three cities were much more willing to find fault with "national schools."

Only among minority residents in the Hartford area did the campaign produce a serious reevaluation of the schooling currently available to the community. Although 58% of blacks, Hispanics, and other minorities gave Hartford-area schools a grade of A or B before HELP WANTED, that percentage plummeted to 31% after the campaign, a fairly dramatic drop of 27 points.

The tendency of residents to rate their local schools highly suggests that for most citizens, the school and workforce crisis is a serious problem that lies elsewhere. Public Agenda's preliminary focus group research suggests that one primary reason for this is the lingering belief that "the basics" — if only everybody had them — would be enough. Focus group respondents were, as were citizens in the campaign cities, disturbed by problems of illiteracy and lack of basic skills. It is easy to understand how someone who cannot read or add and subtract will be handicapped as a worker. The graphic nature of problems such as illiteracy or school drop-outs lends itself to compelling media coverage and easy comprehension. Much of the most effective and dramatic coverage in the HELP WANTED campaigns emphasized precisely these points.

It is much less clear to most people why large numbers of students need advanced algebra, what is actually meant by "critical thinking skills," and why children who read, write, know a little history, and get A's and B's in an attractive, safe school might need more. Given the standards most people currently apply, local schools in middle class neighborhoods probably *are* doing well. Thus, the next communications hurdle is raising the public's standards for what education really needs to be in the 21st century. This may well be a communications challenge that should be addressed in the wake of HELP WANTED, and one that will require a more targeted, direct approach.

There is a second aspect of this problem that also needs to be explored. In the HELP WANTED cities, people with children in the public schools rated local schools much more highly than people who either did not have children or did not have children currently in public school. Some very preliminary focus group observations suggest that for some public school parents, the idea that their own children's schooling is substandard produces a sense of failure and vulnerability, rather than a cry for reform. Some parents may feel guilty that they cannot afford private schools for their children, or concerned that they themselves lack the education or sophistication to get the best schooling for their child. In these circumstances, denial or rationalization is an understandable reaction. To the degree that this hypothesis is true, it suggests that communications efforts directed at public school parents will have to be carefully researched and sensitively crafted. Again, constructively enlisting the energies and commitment of public school parents in dramatically upgrading middle class education will probably require longer, and more targeted communications efforts in communities where the more generic HELP WANTED campaign has paved the way.

It is much less clear to most people why children who read, write, know a little history, and get A's and B's in an attractive, safe school might need more.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The findings from the surveys conducted before and after these initial HELP WANTED campaigns indicate that substantial progress can be made in helping citizens understand and confront this complex and multi-faceted issue. HELP WANTED is a "real life" campaign, the consequence of voluntary efforts by media and community organizations and institutions. It is replicable, practical, affordable, and it achieves valuable results in moving public opinion.

More enlightened public opinion is not HELP WANTED's only beneficial result. It is one of several positive effects. Interviews with media and community representatives following HELP WANTED in the pilot cities suggest that, in addition to whatever movement in public opinion was achieved, the campaigns were valuable in building alliances between local media and school reform efforts. They were valuable in building leadership and community coalitions to tackle school and workforce problems. And they served as a valuable catalyst prompting greater business involvement in the schools, in support of families, and in workforce retraining.

But changing public perceptions was and is HELP WANTED's primary goal, and we believe its usefulness in that task has been documented. Even more important, the research has revealed concrete ways to enhance the impact of future campaigns.

Optimally, campaigns should be at least six weeks long and include virtually daily coverage of school reform and workplace topics. The relationship between the length and intensity of the campaigns and their ability to affect prevailing attitudes is clear and, it seems to us, indisputable.

The evaluation also strongly suggests that coverage of the HELP WANTED issues in daily TV *news* programming, as was done by WTHR-TV in Indianapolis and WFSB-TV in Hartford, is essential to the campaign's impact. Communities may also want to consider supplementing public service media campaigns with some paid advertising — either using materials prepared by Public Agenda or by other nonpartisan groups — to build the critical mass of coverage required to attract public attention and alter existing perceptions.

Future HELP WANTED campaigns should devote more attention — and perhaps more candor — to the educational deficiencies of middle class schools.

Local businesses and other organizations should consider using HELP WANTED materials with "captive audiences," that is, in circumstances where exposure and attention can be virtually guaranteed. Union Carbide Corporation, for example, conducted an in-house effort directed at employees during the period of the Hartford HELP WANTED campaign. For three weeks, Union Carbide used Public Agenda's HELP WANTED materials in employee newsletters, as posters, and as hand-outs in meetings and common areas. A subsequent evaluation of that in-house

effort indicates that this condensed, three-week effort with Union Carbide's "captive audience" produced increases in knowledge of key facts in the range of seven to eight percentage points.

Beyond incorporating these technical refinements, this evaluation suggests that future HELP WANTED campaigns should devote more attention — and perhaps more candor — to the educational deficiencies of middle class schools, given the more competitive, technologically-advanced economic environment the country faces. The difficulty of this task, however, should not be underestimated. It is likely to require more research, fresh approaches, and a more sustained and targeted communications effort following the HELP WANTED campaign.

The Opportunity

Commmunities that choose to launch HELP WANTED efforts in the future have a special opportunity. They have the opportunity to craft a more effective, more powerful public education tool based on what we have learned here. They can build on the campaign's ability to engage the interest of the nation's minorities — groups who have been disproportionately ill-served by inadequate schools and substandard education. Communities will better understand the special challenge of piercing middle class complacency, and can strengthen their efforts in this area accordingly. But the biggest opportunity is that of timing.

The nation's new preoccupation with trade and competitiveness makes HELP WANTED more relevant and more timely than it was in fall 1991. And it makes an effort such as this even more essential if we are to launch a constructive and purposeful debate on how to upgrade the skills of our students and workers. Communities can build on the momentum of the competitiveness issue to focus attention on education, schools and worker training. They can use HELP WANTED to talk about what we can do rather than whom we can blame. The timing could not be better.

Communities can build on the momentum of the competitiveness issue to focus attention on education, schools, and worker training.

Endnotes

*See *Crosstalk: The Public, the Experts, and Competitiveness* published by the Business-Higher Education Forum and the Public Agenda Foundation, 1991.

**Focus groups were conducted in ten cities across the country to shape the design of the campaign and to pretest materials prepared for it.

Supporting Tables

TABLE 1

Enhanced Knowledge About Illiteracy

"As far as you know, about how many adults in the U.S. are "functionally illiterate" and cannot read beyond the 7th grade level?"

CORRECT ANSWER: "About 20 in every 100 (20%)"

	Pretest Total	Posttest Total	TV News Viewers	Newspaper Readers
	%	%	%	%
Hartford	21	23	26	21
Indianapolis	22	27	26	27
Phoenix	27	27	27	28

TABLE 2

Enhanced Knowledge About Drop-Outs

"As far as you know, about how many high school students in the U.S. drop out and not graduate? Would you say..."

CORRECT ANSWER: "About 25 in every 100 (25%)"

	Pretest Total	Posttest Total	TV News Viewers	Newspaper Readers
	%	%	%	%
Hartford	16	16	21	16
Indianapolis	17	24	27	26
Phoenix	22	20	22	19

TABLE 3

Enhanced Knowledge About Computer Use By Blue-Collar Workers

"As far as you know, about how many blue collar workers do you think will need to be able to use a computer in ten years? Would you say..."

CORRECT ANSWER: "Almost all"

	Pretest Total	Posttest Total	TV News Viewers	Newspaper Readers
	%	%	%	%
Hartford	58	59	59	54
Indianapolis	60	65	70	66
Phoenix	63	65	70	63

TABLE 4

Enhanced Knowledge About Illiteracy Among Minorities

"As far as you know, about how many adults in the U.S. are "functionally illiterate" and cannot read beyond the 7th grade level?"

CORRECT ANSWER: "About 20 in every 100 (20%)"

	PRETEST		POSTTEST	
	Whites	Minorities	Whites	Minorities
	%	%	%	%
Hartford	21	20	22	32
Indianapolis	21	27	26	34
Phoenix	25	38	28	28

TABLE 5

Enhanced Knowledge About Drop-Outs Among Minorities

"As far as you know, about how many high school students in the U.S. drop out and not graduate? Would you say..."

CORRECT ANSWER: "About 25 in every 100 (25%)"

	PRETEST		POSTTEST	
	Whites	Minorities	Whites	Minorities
	%	%	%	%
Hartford	15	19	12	39
Indianapolis	16	22	22	33
Phoenix	21	33	19	23

TABLE 6

Lack Of Basic Skills As Threat To Standard Of Living

"Here are problems that some people say threaten our standard of living. For each one, please tell me if you think it is a very serious problem, a somewhat serious problem, or not a serious problem at all?"

"Very Serious"

	Pretest Total	Posttest Total	TV News Viewers	Newspaper Readers
	%	%	%	%
Too many Americans who lack basic skills such as reading and writing				
Hartford	63	69	66	66
Indianapolis	63	69	72	71
Phoenix	63	64	61	67

TABLE 7

Shortage Of Technically Trained Workers As Threat To Standard Of Living

"Here are problems that some people say threaten our standard of living. For each one, please tell me if you think it is a very serious problem, a somewhat serious problem, or not a serious problem at all?"

	"Very Serious"			
	Pretest Total	Posttest Total	TV News Viewers	Newspaper Readers
	%	%	%	%
A shortage of Americans with advanced scientific and technical skills				
Hartford	51	52	54	54
Indianapolis	51	56	62	59
Phoenix	48	52	54	55

TABLE 8

Inadequate Public Schools As Threat To Standard Of Living

"Here are problems that some people say threaten our standard of living. For each one, please tell me if you think it is a very serious problem, a somewhat serious problem, or not a serious problem at all?"

	"Very Serious"			
	Pretest Total	Posttest Total	TV News Viewers	Newspaper Readers
	%	%	%	%
Inadequate public schools in many communities				
Hartford	57	61	64	55
Indianapolis	64	64	69	64
Phoenix	60	60	61	55

TABLE 9

Increased Minority Concern About Inadequate Schools

"Here are problems that some people say threaten our standard of living. For each one, please tell me if you think it is a very serious problem, a somewhat serious problem, or not a serious problem at all?"

"Very Serious"

	PRETEST		POSTTEST	
	Whites	Minorities	Whites	Minorities
	%	%	%	%
Inadequate Schools				
Hartford	57	62	59	77
Indianapolis	62	73	60	88
Phoenix	59	67	60	67

TABLE 10

Increased Support For Business Tax Incentives And Longer School Year

"Here are some ideas that some people think will increase the competitiveness of our work force. For each one, I'll also read a pro and con argument. Tell me if you favor or oppose each idea after thinking about the arguments. Would you say you are strongly or somewhat in favor of/opposed to this idea?"

FAVOR (Strongly/Somewhat favor)

	Pretest Total	Posttest Total	TV News Viewers	Newspaper Readers
	%	%	%	%
Give tax breaks to companies that train workers in computer and technical skills.				
Hartford	65	61	65	65
Indianapolis	55	60	67	63
Phoenix	52	59	58	61
Lengthen school year from 180 to 220 days.				
Hartford	50	56	63	62
Indianapolis	41	53	57	56
Phoenix	55	57	52	64

TABLE 11

Consensus Level Support For Literacy Program, High School Exit Exam, And More Science and Math

"Here are some ideas that some people think will increase the competitiveness of our work force. For each one, I'll also read a pro and con argument. Tell me if you favor or oppose each idea after thinking about the arguments. Would you say you are strongly or somewhat in favor of/opposed to this idea?"

FAVOR (Strongly/Somewhat favor)

	Pretest Total	Posttest Total	TV News Viewers	Newspaper Readers
	%	%	%	%
Set up a national program for any adult who wants to learn to read and write.				
Hartford	80	78	78	82
Indianapolis	79	84	87	84
Phoenix	80	78	83	72
Require math and science starting in kindergarten for all children, not just high achievers.				
Hartford	80	81	82	78
Indianapolis	80	82	84	81
Phoenix	81	78	76	80
Require all students to pass an achievement test before getting a high school diploma.				
Hartford	75	81	87	83
Indianapolis	80	79	81	77
Phoenix	79	79	73	81

TABLE 12

Little Change In Support For Tying Teacher Pay to Student Performance

"Here are some ideas that some people think will increase the competitiveness of our work force. For each one, I'll also read a pro and con argument. Tell me if you favor or oppose each idea after thinking about the arguments. Would you say you are strongly or somewhat in favor of/opposed to this idea?"

FAVOR (Strongly/Somewhat favor)

	Pretest Total	Posttest Total	TV News Viewers	Newspaper Readers
	%	%	%	%
Base pay and promotion for teachers and principals on how much their students improve.				
Hartford	46	49	47	51
Indianapolis	50	47	53	50
Phoenix	52	53	53	56

TABLE 13

Competitiveness Still A Low Priority After Campaign

"As you know, the United States government has a limited amount of money, and not every problem can be a top priority. I'll read you some problems facing our country. For each, please tell me how serious you think it is using a scale of 1 to 10 where 1 means `Not serious at all, should get the lowest priority' and 10 means `Extremely serious, should get the highest priority.' Just choose any number between 1 and 10 for each problem."

Top Priority (8, 9 or 10 Rating)

	Pretest Total	Posttest Total	TV News Viewers	Newspaper Readers
	%	%	%	%
Clean up the environment				
Hartford	76	77	79	74
Indianapolis	74	70	78	70
Phoenix	75	73	74	66
Improve nation's public schools				
Hartford	70	76	80	73
Indianapolis	78	80	84	84
Phoenix	76	73	72	69
Reduce federal budget deficit				
Hartford	64	68	76	70
Indianapolis	65	67	67	72
Phoenix	65	69	66	74
Fight spread of AIDS				
Hartford	69	67	71	68
Indianapolis	68	66	77	69
Phoenix	64	66	71	70
Reduce taxes on poor and middle class Americans				
Hartford	64	61	68	57
Indianapolis	50	57	66	59
Phoenix	57	58	61	62
Help poor children get better start				
Hartford	57	54	61	48
Indianapolis	57	60	65	63
Phoenix	56	55	59	56
Increase U.S. ability to compete in world economy				
Hartford	51	57	64	60
Indianapolis	45	48	57	52
Phoenix	45	44	47	47
Send astronaut to the planet Mars				
Hartford	10	4	3	2
Indianapolis	10	7	7	7
Phoenix	6	6	8	9

TABLE 14

Local Public Schools Still Highly Rated

"Students are often given grades of A, B, C, D, and Fail to grade the quality of their work. Suppose the public schools themselves, in your community, were graded in the same way. What grade would you give the public schools in your community — A, B, C, D, or Fail?"

	Pretest Total	Posttest Total	TV News Viewers	Newspaper Readers
	%	%	%	%
Grade of "A" or "B"				
Hartford	58	56	54	68
Indianapolis	41	38	39	38
Phoenix	37	36	37	32
Grade of "C"				
Hartford	31	33	32	23
Indianapolis	35	36	31	37
Phoenix	41	42	40	43
Grade of "D" or "Fail"				
Hartford	10	11	13	9
Indianapolis	22	25	30	24
Phoenix	19	19	19	20

TABLE 15

Lower Grades To Nation's Public Schools

"How about the public schools in the nation as a whole? What grade would you give the public schools nationally — A, B, C, D, or Fail?"

	Pretest Total	Posttest Total	TV News Viewers	Newspaper Readers
	%	%	%	%
Grade of "A" or "B"				
Hartford	18	14	15	15
Indianapolis	17	12	12	13
Phoenix	19	12	13	12
Grade of "C"				
Hartford	55	57	54	58
Indianapolis	54	58	53	58
Phoenix	51	53	59	51
Grade of "D" or "Fail"				
Hartford	26	27	28	26
Indianapolis	27	30	34	29
Phoenix	30	34	27	37

TABLE 16

Public Schools Parents Rate Local Schools More Highly

"Students are often given grades of A, B, C, D, and Fail to grade the quality of their work. Suppose the public schools themselves, in your community, were graded in the same way. What grade would you give the public schools in your community — A, B, C, D, or Fail?"

	POSTTEST	
	Kids in Public School	No Kids in Public School
	%	%
Grade of "A" or "B"		
Hartford	66	54
Indianapolis	53	34
Phoenix	52	30

TABLE 17

Public School Parents Less Likely To Attribute Success Japanese/ German To Better Trained Workers

"Different people have different ideas about why countries like Japan and Germany are doing so well in selling their products to other countries. For each of the following, please tell me if you think it is a very important reason, a somewhat important reason, or not a reason at all that countries like Japan and Germany are doing so well."

	POSTTEST: "Very Important"	
	Kids in Public School	No Kids in Public School
	%	%
Their workers are better trained and educated		
Hartford	51	68
Indianapolis	57	67
Phoenix	58	61

TABLE 18

Hartford Minorities Give Lower Marks To Public Schools After Campaign

"Students are often given grades of A, B, C, D, and Fail to grade the quality of their work. Suppose the public schools themselves, in your community, were graded in the same way. What grade would you give the public schools in your community — A, B, C, D, or Fail?"

	PRETEST		POSTTEST	
	Whites	Minorities	Whites	Minorities
	%	%	%	%
Grade of "A" or "B"				
Hartford	58	58	60	31
Indianapolis	42	38	38	37
Phoenix	38	34	36	35

Additional Findings

TABLE 19

Enhanced Knowledge That U.S. Illiteracy Is Higher Than That Of Europe Or Japan

"What about adults who can read? Do you think the U.S. has a higher percentage of adults who can read, about the same percentage, or a lower percentage of adults who can read than Japan and Western Europe?"

	Pretest Total	Posttest Total	TV News Viewers	Newspaper Readers
	%	%	%	%
U.S. has a lower percentage				
Hartford	57	64	66	66
Indianapolis	68	63	64	62
Phoenix	64	62	63	62

TABLE 20

Residents More Likely To Attribute Japanese And German Success To Training And Education

"Different people have different ideas about why countries like Japan and Germany are doing so well in selling their products to other countries. For each of the following, please tell me if you think it is a very important reason, a somewhat important reason, or not a reason at all that countries like Japan and Germany are doing so well."

"Very Important"

	Pretest Total	Posttest Total	TV News Viewers	Newspaper Readers
	%	%	%	%
Their workers are better trained and educated				
Hartford	63	65	69	66
Indianapolis	59	65	68	64
Phoenix	60	60	66	56

TABLE 21

College Educated More Likely To Support Use Of Latest Technology

"Which of the following comes closer to your opinion? Do you think:

Companies should use the latest technology to help keep production costs down, even if that means some people will lose their jobs, or

Companies should not use the latest technology whenever that means some people will lose their jobs."

POSTTEST: "Companies should use latest technology"

	High School	Some Coll.	College
	%	%	%
Hartford	59	74	87
Indianapolis	63	67	81
Phoenix	61	75	72

TABLE 22

College Educated More Likely To Rate Local Schools Highly

"Students are often given grades of A, B, C, D, and Fail to grade the quality of their work. Suppose the public schools themselves, in your community, were graded in the same way. What grade would you give the public schools in your community — A, B, C, D, or Fail?"

POSTTEST

	High School	Some Coll.	College
	%	%	%
Grade of "A" or "B"			
Hartford	50	59	62
Indianapolis	37	39	39
Phoenix	36	39	34
Grade of "C"			
Hartford	35	33	30
Indianapolis	37	40	32
Phoenix	42	41	44
Grade of "D" or "Fail"			
Hartford	14	8	8
Indianapolis	25	20	28
Phoenix	19	19	17

TABLE 23

College Educated More Likely To Give Low Rating To Nation's Public Schools

"How about the public schools in the nation as a whole? What grade would you give the public schools nationally — A, B, C, D, or Fail?"

	POSTTEST		
	High School	Some Coll.	College
	%	%	%
Grade of "A" or "B"			
Hartford	23	7	8
Indianapolis	16	4	7
Phoenix	15	7	12
Grade of "C"			
Hartford	54	59	61
Indianapolis	57	61	59
Phoenix	52	59	51
Grade of "D" or "Fail"			
Hartford	21	35	30
Indianapolis	27	35	35
Phoenix	32	35	37

"Here are problems that some people say threaten our standard of living. For each one, please tell me if you think it is a very serious problem, a somewhat serious problem, or not a serious problem at all?"

POSTTEST: "Very Serious"

	High School	Some Coll.	College
	%	%	%
Too many American who aren't willing to work hard anymore			
Hartford	61	60	48
Indianapolis	65	69	43
Phoenix	65	59	50
Unfair trading practices by other countries			
Hartford	53	39	28
Indianapolis	50	35	26
Phoenix	44	43	37
Demands for higher wages by American labor unions			
Hartford	40	28	27
Indianapolis	47	39	24
Phoenix	43	31	25
Too much government regulation of business			
Hartford	31	31	22
Indianapolis	38	35	19
Phoenix	39	30	32

TABLE 24

Less Educated More Likely To Be Concerned About Work Ethic, Trade Practices, Unions, and Government Regulation

TABLE 25

Less Educated More Likely To Attribute German And Japanese Success To Low Pay, Unfair Trading Practices, And Hard Work

"Different people have different ideas about why countries like Japan and Germany are doing so well in selling their products to other countries. For each of the following, please tell me if you think it is a very important reason, a somewhat important reason, or not a reason at all that countries like Japan and Germany are doing so well."

POSTTEST: "Very Important"

	High School	Some Coll.	College
	%	%	%
They pay lower wages to their workers			
Hartford	36	34	28
Indianapolis	36	35	18
Phoenix	35	21	25
They have unfair trading rules that make U.S. products very expensive for their people to buy			
Hartford	64	59	40
Indianapolis	59	50	47
Phoenix	58	58	44
Their workers work harder			
Hartford	65	64	59
Indianapolis	56	57	44
Phoenix	60	59	60

TABLE 26

Threats To Our Standard Of Living: Very Serious Problems

"Here are problems that some people say threaten our standard of living. For each one, please tell me if you think it is a very serious problem, a somewhat serious problem, or not a serious problem at all?"

"Very Serious"

	Pretest Total	Posttest Total	TV News Viewers	Newspaper Readers
	%	%	%	%
The size of the federal deficit				
Hartford	70	72	78	78
Indianapolis	65	69	72	71
Phoenix	69	73	76	77
Too many Americans who lack basic skills such as reading and writing				
Hartford	63	69	66	66
Indianapolis	63	69	72	70
Phoenix	63	64	61	67
Inadequate public schools in many communities				
Hartford	57	61	64	55
Indianapolis	64	64	69	64
Phoenix	60	60	61	55
Too many American who aren't willing to work hard anymore				
Hartford	57	56	56	55
Indianapolis	63	59	69	64
Phoenix	57	58	56	55
Businesses that pay too much attention to short-term profits rather than long-term growth				
Hartford	52	49	45	53
Indianapolis	45	51	57	57
Phoenix	51	54	57	54
A shortage of Americans with advanced scientific and technical skills				
Hartford	51	52	54	54
Indianapolis	51	56	62	59
Phoenix	48	52	54	55
Unfair trading practices by other countries				
Hartford	43	42	44	41
Indianapolis	46	41	53	44
Phoenix	41	41	42	43

TABLE 26 (Continued)

Threats To Our Standard Of Living: Very Serious Problems

	"Very Serious"			
	Pretest Total	Posttest Total	TV News Viewers	Newspaper Readers
	%	%	%	%
Not enough investment in new products and equipment by U.S. companies				
Hartford	36	38	45	42
Indianapolis	28	34	34	37
Phoenix	34	38	42	46
Demands for higher wages by American labor unions				
Hartford	32	33	38	40
Indianapolis	36	39	47	47
Phoenix	27	34	40	37
Too much government regulation of business				
Hartford	26	29	27	32
Indianapolis	32	33	34	38
Phoenix	35	34	44	45

TABLE 27

Reasons Countries Like Japan And Germany Are Doing So Well Selling To Other Countries

"Different people have different ideas about why countries like Japan and Germany are doing so well in selling their products to other countries. For each of the following, please tell me if you think it is a very important reason, a somewhat important reason, or not a reason at all that countries like Japan and Germany are doing so well."

	"Very Important"			
	Pretest Total	**Posttest** Total	TV News Viewers	Newspaper Readers
	%	%	%	%
They pay lower wages to their workers				
Hartford	33	33	38	36
Indianapolis	35	31	37	33
Phoenix	29	28	30	33
They have unfair trading rules that make U.S. products very expensive for their people to buy				
Hartford	52	55	59	55
Indianapolis	51	54	58	58
Phoenix	52	54	60	57
Their workers are better trained and educated				
Hartford	63	65	69	66
Indianapolis	59	65	68	64
Phoenix	60	60	66	56
Their workers work harder				
Hartford	58	62	68	62
Indianapolis	60	53	55	57
Phoenix	60	60	65	61
Their companies invest more in new technology				
Hartford	61	60	63	62
Indianapolis	56	57	59	61
Phoenix	55	58	66	63
A bigger share of their work force is made up of scientists and engineers				
Hartford	40	40	47	40
Indianapolis	39	41	44	46
Phoenix	36	40	49	43

TABLE 28

Exposure To Campaign: Saw Or Heard At Least One Aspect Of HELP WANTED Campaign

"Do you recall seeing a half hour HELP WANTED film broadcast on _____?
Do you recall seeing any commercials about HELP WANTED on _____?
Do you recall seeing a HELP WANTED insert in _____?
Do you recall seeing a HELP WANTED ballot with questions about ways to improve our country's ability to compete in _____?
Did you fill out the ballot and send it in?
Did you attend a HELP WANTED meeting where the issue of the work force was discussed and a film was shown?

Those answering yes to any one of the questions above:"

	Posttest Total	TV News Viewers	Newspaper Readers
	%	%	%
Hartford	55	74	67
Indianapolis	48	59	55
Phoenix	36	50	45

Methodology

In each of the three cities (Hartford, Indianapolis and Phoenix), a survey was conducted before the HELP WANTED campaign and another survey was conducted at the campaign's close. Respondents were independently drawn for both surveys (i.e. respondents from the first survey were not re-surveyed). The questionnaires administered before and after the campaign were identical except for several questions about exposure to the campaign added to the second questionnaire.

The surveys were of just over 400 randomly selected adults interviewed over the telephone. The samples were randomly selected using random-digit dialing techniques and represented a cross-section of adults in the metropolitan areas (defined as a set of counties representing the cities' media markets). Each survey has a margin of error of plus or minus five points. The demographic characteristics of the samples were checked against U.S. census data of the local areas, and weighed to reflect those data where necessary. The surveys were fielded and tabulated by Princeton Survey Research Associates.

City	Survey Dates		Sample Sizes	
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
Hartford	9/3-8/91	10/9-15/91	409	405
Indianapolis	8/26-31/91	10/16-25/91	407	415
Phoenix	9/23-29/91	11/5-11/91	406	404

Ballot Results Compared to Survey

Comparing the results of the ballots sent in by citizens of the three cities and of the random surveys is problematic. Survey respondents are randomly selected, with each resident having an equal and known probability of inclusion. Ballot respondents on the other hand are self-selecting and it is therefore impossible to estimate the extent to which they represent the attitudes of the overall public. They may have a higher interest in the topic, or be more dissatisfied with the status quo, and therefore eager to speak out.

With this caveat in mind, a comparison of the ballot results to the surveys conducted after the campaign shows a very close correspondence between the two. Put another way, in 24 of the 30 (10 in each city) items about threats to our standard of living, the differences between the ballot results and the surveys were less than 10 points. Illustrating this correspondence even more dramatically is that a ten point gap is evident in only two of the 32 (12 questions across the three cities) items about proposals to increase work force competitiveness.

Questions on the survey and the ballot were identically worded, although the questionnaires were much lengthier, containing a number of items not included in the ballot. In addition, ballots contained some local questions not asked on the questionnaires.

It is difficult to determine the reasons for divergences between the ballot and survey findings, where such differences exist. Two possible explanations are the methodological differences between the two instruments described above, and the unknowable differences in the demographic composition of the two samples (e.g. in education, gender, interest in the issues etc.).

Ballot Results

Threats to Prosperity

"Here are problems that some people say threaten our standard of living. For each one, please indicate if you think it is a very serious problem, a somewhat serious problem, or not a problem at all."

A very serious problem is:	Phoenix	Ind.	Hartford	Nashville*
	%	%	%	%
The size of the federal budget deficit	77	78	74	45
Too many Americans who lack basic skills such as reading and writing	71	59	66	57
A shortage of American workers with advanced scientific and technical skills	58	42	52	40
Inadequate public schools in many communities	56	52	56	60
Too many Americans who aren't willing to work hard anymore	51	46	48	46
Businesses that pay too much attention to short-term profits rather than long-term growth	50	48	56	38
Not enough investment in new products and equipment by U.S. companies	44	41	43	25
Unfair trading practices by other countries	38	43	37	28
Demands for higher wages by American labor unions	29	30	32	29
Too much government regulation of business	25	19	17	28

*Nashville campaign conducted Spring 1991. Question wording for Nashville ballot may vary slightly.

Ballot Results

Threats to Prosperity

"Here are problems that some people say threaten our standard of living. For each one, please indicate if you think it is a very serious problem, a somewhat serious problem, or not a problem at all."

	Very/Somewhat	Not At All*
	%	%
The size of the federal budget deficit		
Phoenix	94	3
Indianapolis	95	2
Hartford	95	3
Nashville	85	14
Too many Americans who lack basic skills such as reading and writing		
Phoenix	95	3
Indianapolis	95	4
Hartford	95	4
Nashville	90	9
Inadequate public schools in many communities		
Phoenix	88	8
Indianapolis	89	8
Hartford	88	8
Nashville	91	8
Businesses that pay too much attention to short-term profits rather than long-term growth		
Phoenix	87	6
Indianapolis	88	6
Hartford	91	5
Nashville	80	18
A shortage of American workers with advanced scientific and technical skills		
Phoenix	89	7
Indianapolis	87	8
Hartford	87	9
Nashville	84	14

*Nashville results combine answers of "Not very serious/Not at all serious".
Note: Percentages will not add up to 100 percent because of rounding and the omission of invalid responses.

Ballot Results

Threats to Prosperity

"Here are problems that some people say threaten our standard of living. For each one, please indicate if you think it is a very serious problem, a somewhat serious problem, or not a problem at all."

	Very/Somewhat	Not At All*
	%	%
Unfair trading practices by other countries		
Phoenix	77	12
Indianapolis	83	9
Hartford	80	10
Nashville	68	29
Too many Americans who aren't willing to work hard anymore		
Phoenix	87	11
Indianapolis	80	18
Hartford	86	12
Nashville	85	13
Not enough investment in new products and equipment by U.S. companies		
Phoenix	82	9
Indianapolis	80	10
Hartford	83	9
Nashville	69	28
Demands for higher wages by American labor unions		
Phoenix	72	21
Indianapolis	66	29
Hartford	75	19
Nashville	61	36
Too much government regulation		
Phoenix	68	20
Indianapolis	61	29
Hartford	61	27
Nashville	72	25

*Nashville results combine answers of "Not very serious/Not at all serious".

Ballot Results

Proposals To Upgrade Schools And Worker Skills

"Here are some ideas that some people think will increase the competitiveness of our work force. For each one, there is also a Pro and Con argument. Please indicate if you favor or oppose each idea after thinking about the Pro and Con."

Give kids remedial help in reading, writing and arithmetic at the first sign they need it.

Pro: Only two in five children now get the help they need.

Con: This will mean a substantial tax increase or deep cuts in other programs.

Phoenix Favor/Oppose	Indianapolis Favor/Oppose	Hartford Favor/Oppose	Nashville* Favor/Oppose
94/4	na	93/6	91/7

Require math and science starting in kindergarten all the way through high school for *all* children, not just high achievers.

Pro: Our kids should get as much math and science as students in countries we compete with.

Con: This will take time away from other subjects like history, music, and literature.

Phoenix Favor/Oppose	Indianapolis Favor/Oppose	Hartford Favor/Oppose	Nashville* Favor/Oppose
86/12	79/18	85/13	84/14

Require all students to pass an achievement test before getting a high school diploma.

Pro: This will guarantee that students have the skills they need.

Con: Many more youngsters may drop out of school.

Phoenix Favor/Oppose	Indianapolis Favor/Oppose	Hartford Favor/Oppose	Nashville* Favor/Oppose
82/15	79/19	83/15	80/18

Set up a national program for any adult who wants to learn to read and write.

Pro: Current programs reach less than 5% of those who need them.

Con: We can't afford to spend billions to educate adults as well as children.

Phoenix Favor/Oppose	Indianapolis Favor/Oppose	Hartford Favor/Oppose	Nashville* Favor/Oppose
81/16	81/16	77/20	77/19

Ballot Results

Proposals To Upgrade Schools And Worker Skills

Expand Head Start programs for preschoolers and health and nutrition programs for grade school students.

Pro: The best way to reduce the dropout rate is to help children at an early age.

Con: This would mean a tax increase or cuts in other programs.

Phoenix Favor/Oppose	Indianapolis Favor/Oppose	Hartford Favor/Oppose	Nashville* Favor/Oppose
na	na	81/15	na

Start intensive "dropout prevention" programs in high school.

Pro: Almost one-fourth of students today don't finish high school.

Con: By high school, these programs are too late.

Phoenix Favor/Oppose	Indianapolis Favor/Oppose	Hartford Favor/Oppose	Nashville* Favor/Oppose
na	76/19	na	83/13

Substantially increase state aid to public schools while giving local communities the power to review how the money is spent.

Pro: This ensures that schools will get more money and be responsive to each community's needs.

Con: This will mean a substantial tax increase or deep cuts in other programs.

Phoenix Favor/Oppose	Indianapolis Favor/Oppose	Hartford Favor/Oppose	Nashville* Favor/Oppose
68/25	na	na	na

Give government scholarships to college graduates who continue their education in science, math, engineering or computers.

Pro: These advanced skills are vital to our economy.

Con: This money should be spent on more urgent problems such as illiteracy and teen pregnancy.

Phoenix Favor/Oppose	Indianapolis Favor/Oppose	Hartford Favor/Oppose	Nashville* Favor/Oppose
68/28	58/36	na	63/32

Ballot Results

Proposals To Upgrade Schools And Worker Skills

Lengthen the school year from 180 to 220 days.

Pro: Children go to school that long in many countries we compete with.

Con: This will mean a substantial tax increase or deep cuts in other programs.

Phoenix Favor/Oppose	Indianapolis Favor/Oppose	Hartford Favor/Oppose	Nashville* Favor/Oppose
67/30	58/38	63/34	51/43

Pay workers based on individual performance, rather than giving automatic pay raises every year.

Pro: The best workers will be rewarded for their efforts.

Con: Automatic raises protect people against unfair managers.

Phoenix Favor/Oppose	Indianapolis Favor/Oppose	Hartford Favor/Oppose	Nashville* Favor/Oppose
na	66/29	79/18	80/17

Give tax breaks to companies that help illiterate workers learn to read.

Pro: Reducing illiteracy will help us compete.

Con: Companies get too many tax breaks already, this money should go to the schools.

Phoenix Favor/Oppose	Indianapolis Favor/Oppose	Hartford Favor/Oppose	Nashville* Favor/Oppose
65/29	57/31	55/40	na

Send welfare recipients who can't read or write to school, rather than making them take a low-skilled job.

Pro: Reducing illiteracy helps the U.S. compete.

Con: Welfare recipients should take jobs to reduce the burden on taxpayers.

Phoenix Favor/Oppose	Indianapolis Favor/Oppose	Hartford Favor/Oppose	Nashville* Favor/Oppose
na	na	62/32	na

Ballot Results

Proposals To Upgrade Schools And Worker Skills

Have colleges require two years of a foreign language to graduate.

Pro: More Americans must speak foreign languages to help the U.S. compete.

Con: English is already the language of international business.

Phoenix Favor/Oppose	Indianapolis Favor/Oppose	Hartford Favor/Oppose	Nashville* Favor/Oppose
58/38	na	na	na

Permit parents to send their children to any public school in the community.

Pro: Schools would have to compete to attract students leading to better schools.

Con: Some schools will be left without money to provide an adequate education.

Phoenix Favor/Oppose	Indianapolis Favor/Oppose	Hartford Favor/Oppose	Nashville* Favor/Oppose
57/37	54/41	na	na

Base pay and promotion for teachers and principals on how much their students improve.

Pro: The best teachers and principals will be rewarded.

Con: This may penalize teachers and principals for things beyond their control such as drug abuse or family problems.

Phoenix Favor/Oppose	Indianapolis Favor/Oppose	Hartford Favor/Oppose	Nashville* Favor/Oppose
56/40	41/55	52/43	54/41

Give tax breaks to companies that train workers in computer and technical skills.

Pro: U.S. workers get much less training than workers in countries we compete with.

Con: Profit-making companies should offer this training on their own, without tax breaks.

Phoenix Favor/Oppose	Indianapolis Favor/Oppose	Hartford Favor/Oppose	Nashville* Favor/Oppose
na	na	56/39	63/33

Ballot Results

Proposals To Upgrade Schools And Worker Skills

Enact a tax increase for education on the condition that school systems would be held accountable for student performance.

Pro: Increased accountability would make sure the money was well spent.
Con: A higher tax, even for a good purpose, is something we can't afford right now.

Phoenix Favor/Oppose	Indianapolis Favor/Oppose	Hartford Favor/Oppose	Nashville* Favor/Oppose
na	na	na	52/40

Make reducing the large number of unskilled workers in low paying jobs a top priority in Indiana.

Pro: When workers fail to meet their potential, the nation's economy suffers.
Con: We face more urgent problems, such as unemployment.

Phoenix Favor/Oppose	Indianapolis Favor/Oppose	Hartford Favor/Oppose	Nashville* Favor/Oppose
na	51/36	na	na

Pay math and science teachers more than other teachers in order to attract the best people.

Pro: Math and science are essential to our economy.
Con: This is not fair to teachers of other subjects who work just as hard.

Phoenix Favor/Oppose	Indianapolis Favor/Oppose	Hartford Favor/Oppose	Nashville* Favor/Oppose
46/49	41/55	na	42/53

*Question wording for Nashville ballot may differ slightly.

Project Sponsors and Collaborating Institutions

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The Business-Higher Education Forum
The Business Roundtable
IBM Corporation
The Lilly Endowment
The Charles Stewart Mott Foundation
The National Science Foundation
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Collaborating Institutions

Capital Cities/ABC.

ABC is offering HELP WANTED to its affiliated stations as part of its Project Literacy PLUS public service campaign.

National Issues Forums.

This national consortium of academic and community organizations is providing moderator training and assistance in organizing public meetings in HELP WANTED sites throughout the country.

Related Publications

Crosstalk: The Public, The Experts, and Competitiveness

John Immerwahr, Jean Johnson, Adam Kernan-Schloss. An indepth study of Americans' views on competitiveness, education, and worker training conducted by Public Agenda in cooperation with the Business-Higher Education Forum. This baseline research for the HELP WANTED project identifies and explains twelve key differences in the way leaders and the public view this multi-faceted issue. 1991. 22pp. $17.50 Available from Public Agenda (212-686-6610).

Putting the Work Ethic To Work

Daniel Yankelovich and John Immerwahr. A ground-breaking report on the state of the American work ethic and its relationship to America's economy. Based on indepth interviews with 845 working Americans, the study includes findings from comparable studies conducted in Great Britain, Israel, Japan, Sweden, and West Germany. 1983. 45pp. $20.00. Available from Public Agenda (212-686-6610).

American Potential

The Business-Higher Education Forum's sweeping re-evaluation of America's education and training challenge. This report tries to build consensus for reform in three key areas: basic education and skills, worker training, and science and technology. To implement the report's recommendations, the Forum has established a five-year committee of its members which, among other activities, launched HELP WANTED with Public Agenda. 1988. 32pp. Available from the Forum (202-939-9345).

Regaining the Competitive Edge: Are We Up To The Job?

Keith Melville. A citizen's discussion guide on competitiveness and the work force prepared by Public Agenda for the National Issues Forums, a national consortium of organizations sponsoring non-partisan public discussions on important issues. 1990. 48pp. $2.95. The guide is distributed by Kendall/Hunt Publishing Company (800-338-5578).

Background Information

About Public Agenda

Founded a decade ago by public opinion analyst Daniel Yankelovich and former Secretary of State Cyrus Vance, the Public Agenda Foundation works to help average citizens better understand critical policy issues and to help the nation's leaders better understand the public's point of view. Public Agenda's indepth public opinion research forms the basis for its extensive citizen education work. Its citizen education materials — used by the National Issues Forums and TV stations and newspapers across the country — have won praise for their credibility and fairness from elected officials from both political parties and from experts and decision-makers across the political spectrum.

About the Business-Higher Education Forum

The Business-Higher Education Forum is a membership organization of selected chief executives of major American corporations, colleges and universities. The Forum's purposes are: to identify, review and act on selected issues of mutual concern; to enhance public awareness of these concerns; and to help guide the evolution of cooperation between corporations and institutions of higher education, while preserving their separate traditional functions. Over the years, the Forum has addressed such critical issues as international economic competitiveness, education and training, R&D partnerships, science and technology, and global interdependence. Don M. Blandin is the Forum's director.

The Forum was founded in 1978 by the American Council on Education (ACE), which represents all accredited post-secondary institutions as well as national and regional higher education associations.

About HELP WANTED

Campaigns are available for sponsorship by media and community groups nationwide throughout this year. In addition, HELP WANTED can be adapted for use as an in-house education campaign by corporations. If you are interested in a community or corporate campaign, please contact: Scott Swenson, Communications Director, The Public Agenda Foundation, 6 East 39th Street, 9th Floor, New York, NY 10016, (212) 686-6610.

The Public Agenda Foundation seeks to raise the level of public discussion about critical policy choices facing the nation.

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